

Notes from the President

Technology, Commercialization, and Pecans

08/03/2010

Commercialization of university technology is deeply ingrained in our mission at Georgia Tech, and we are eager to help multiply our successes through partnerships with government, business, industry, and our colleagues in academia. We welcome these opportunities for making a real and lasting impact and creating the economic growth necessary to support our region and our nation.

During my tour of the state last month, Val and I visited an impressive new solar installation, located on a pecan farm in Arlington, about 40 miles southwest of Albany. Currently, it is largest private commercial solar power system in Georgia — and second only to our array atop the Campus Recreation Center — utilizing high-efficiency solar cells from [Suniva](#), the Southeast's first solar cell manufacturer whose technology was incubated at Tech under the direction of Regents' Professor [Ajeet Rohatgi](#) and our [University Center of Excellence in Photovoltaics](#).

The 200-kilowatt solar farm takes up an acre of the property owned by Trey and Shena Pippen, but it is expected to produce 310,000-kilowatt hours of solar energy a year — enough to support 20 to 30 houses. For the next five years, Georgia Power will purchase all of the energy produced, adding to its own renewable energy portfolio. After that, Trey will be able to supplement the energy needs of his farm by drawing from the solar array.

Several reports, including a [recent one issued by faculty in our School of Public Policy](#), have shown a large potential for renewable energy in the South. This is a prime example of how technology developed at Tech is making a positive impact on the economy, helping to address society's grand challenges, and catalyzing the role of small businesses in innovation.

G. P. "Bud" Peterson
President, Georgia Tech